

**POSTHUMOUS MUSIC BETWEEN MEANING AND MONEY:  
ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN A CHANGING TECHNOLOGICAL  
LANDSCAPE**

by

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Bachelor's Thesis

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30.06.2025

## **Abstract**

Posthumous music releases have become increasingly common, especially in hip hop, sparking debates over whether they respectfully preserve an artist's legacy or exploit it for profit, a tension increasingly intensified by AI technologies. This study investigates how fans and artists justify their support for or opposition to posthumous releases, considering the tension between cultural and economic values. Mac Miller serves as a case study, with his posthumous releases widely seen as respectfully managed. Using a qualitative design with semi-structured interviews, 16 participants (artists and fans) shared their views on posthumous music. An abductive thematic approach was used to analyse the data. Fans and artists voiced shared concerns about exploitation in posthumous music, especially when commercial motives overshadow respect for an artist's legacy. While fans were more critical of profit-driven releases, artists saw commercial structures as necessary to preserve and share their work. AI technologies intensified fears of exploitation due to the loss of human creativity and control. Clear consent mechanisms—like musical wills—were viewed as important ways to protect artists' autonomy and ensure releases remain meaningful tributes. Overall, posthumous releases involve balancing cultural and economic values. Ethical approaches balance profit with respect for an artist's legacy through transparency, musical wills, and clear agreements about AI use. These strategies help ensure these releases remain genuine tributes that honour, rather than exploit, the artist's legacy.

*Keywords:* posthumous music, ethics, artificial intelligence, legacy, exploitation

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## 1. Introduction

In today's music industry, death doesn't always mean the end of an artist's creative output. Posthumous releases have long been part of the music industry, from Jimi Hendrix to Tupac Shakur, whose post-death discography now exceeds the number of albums he released during his lifetime (Blair, n.d.; Carter, 2020; Patllollu et al., 2023). In recent years, however, such releases have become more common, especially in the hip hop scene. The genre's tragic pattern of untimely deaths, combined with many artists' large collections of unfinished material, has led to a rise in posthumous albums (Cole, n.d.; Collins, 2025; Osei, n.d.; Rindner, 2025). Artists such as Juice WRLD, XXXTentacion, Pop Smoke, Nipsey Hussle, and Mac Miller have all seen major releases after their deaths, often accompanied by surges in sales and streaming numbers (Blair, n.d.; Caulfield, 2019). Posthumous releases have become a familiar part of the music industry, especially in hip hop.

This has sparked debate. Some people view posthumous releases as tributes that keep an artist's legacy going; others see them as exploitative, shaped more by commercial gain than artistic intent (Carter, 2020; Osei, n.d.; Patllollu et al., 2023). Reactions vary widely among fans and musicians. Where some fans may be excited to hear more music from their favourite artists, others see them as a cash grab and feel that less is more with such releases (Carter, 2020; Collins, 2025; Osei, n.d.; Rindner, 2025). Certain releases—like the latest from Pop Smoke and XXXTentacion—have drawn criticism, while others, like Mac Miller's *Circles* and *Balloonism*, are praised for their care and seen as rare examples of posthumous releases done well (Carter, 2020; Collins, 2025; Rindner, 2025). While certain musicians have made it clear that they don't want any music released after their deaths, with Tyler, the Creator calling it “gross” and Anderson .Paak even tattooing his wishes permanently on his arm, Ed Sheeran has taken the opposite stance, openly planning a release for after his death (Cole, n.d.;

Patlollu et al., 2023). Views on posthumous releases clearly differ, among both fans and artists.

Posthumous releases raise important ethical questions about consent, autonomy, authenticity, and economic motives. Unlike traditional collaborations, the artist is no longer present to approve or reject decisions, leaving families, collaborators, and record labels to interpret what they might have wanted. This creates tension between artistic values and commercial incentives, as such releases often continue to generate revenue long after an artist's death. Labels often seek to sustain long-term revenue from an artist's music, strategically planning posthumous releases to maximise profit (Patlollu et al., 2023). Blair (n.d., par. 22) states that modern hip hop artists might be “more valuable to their labels dead than they are alive”.

Developments in artificial intelligence (AI) further complicate this. AI tools can now isolate or replicate artists' voices, generate new lyrics, and even produce entire songs—capabilities already used in the release of The Beatles' *Now and Then* and experimental projects like David Guetta's AI-generated Eminem verse (Bestall, 2024; Garcia, 2023; Patlollu et al., 2023; Savage, 2023). These tools expand what's possible but also intensify concerns around authenticity, consent, and creative autonomy.

Despite the growing prevalence of posthumous music, the topic has received limited scholarly attention. While there is some literature available on death-related publicity (Brandes et al., 2014; Radford & Bloch, 2012), no research has been published yet on how both the public and the industry perceive posthumous releases. This becomes especially important in light of technological advances like AI and voice cloning. This research addresses that gap by exploring posthumous music as a culturally relevant and ethically complex phenomenon, offering insight into how people justify their support for or opposition to these releases.

This study explores the ethical considerations surrounding posthumous music releases, with particular attention to the tension between cultural and economic values. Some see these releases as a way to honour the artist, while others see them as commercially motivated. These questions are not only relevant for fans and musicians but also for those in the industry who must navigate the legacy of an artist after death. The aim is to understand how both fans and artists reflect on key issues such as authenticity, control, commercialisation, and the influence of AI in the continuation and presentation of an artist's work after their death. The central research question is:

*How do fans and artists justify their support for or opposition to posthumous music releases, considering the tension between cultural and economic values?*

This study uses Mac Miller as a case study, offering a rare example of how such releases can be handled with care. His first posthumous album, *Circles* (2020), was nearly finished at the time of his death and completed by producer Jon Brion at the family's request (Carter, 2020; Rindner, 2025). His most recent release, *Balloonism* (2025), draws from material recorded over a decade ago and was released with minimal changes, in line with what close collaborators and family say were Miller's plans (Collins, 2025). As Josh Berg, one of Miller's collaborators, puts it, the family "really lead the way in showing how tenderness and care can be accomplished with posthumous projects" (Collins, 2025, par. 42).

The next chapter provides an overview of existing literature relevant to the ethical and cultural context of posthumous music releases. This is followed by a methodology chapter, which outlines the qualitative approach of this study, using interviews to gather in-depth insights from both fans and artists. Finally, the findings are discussed in relation to the literature, followed by concluding reflections.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The intrusion of economic interests into the cultural field raises important ethical questions, especially when it comes to posthumous music releases. When artists are no longer able to make decisions about their work, commercial interests may take the lead, creating tension between preserving artistic integrity and maximizing profit. This tension is further complicated by the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), which can be used to extend or recreate an artist's work in ways that may not align with their original intent. This theoretical framework explores these issues through several lenses: Pierre Bourdieu's work on cultural production, Boltanski and Thévenot's orders of worth theory, debates on authenticity and commercialisation, and concerns around consent and autonomy.

### **2.1 Cultural vs. Economic Logic in Posthumous Music**

Pierre Bourdieu's (1983) work on cultural production describes a fundamental contrast between the cultural field and the economic field, each shaped by its own logic. In the cultural field, symbolic capital, such as prestige, recognition, and respect, is prioritized over financial success. Bourdieu refers to this as the 'economic world reversed', where a disinterest in profit, status, or official recognition can actually strengthen an artist's credibility (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 320). In its most autonomous form, this field operates almost like a "game of loser wins" (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 320), meaning that commercial failure can even enhance perceived artistic integrity. Artists are expected to produce work for other artists or cultural insiders rather than for mass audiences, following their own artistic vision rather than market demands. In this context, commercial success can even be seen as a weakness rather than a sign of quality. Still, as Bourdieu emphasizes, the cultural field is never fully separate from the economic one (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 320). Over time, financial interests can start to shape which works are produced, how they are received, and what is seen as valuable. The balance

between artistic freedom and commercial interests remains a key tension in cultural production.

This tension becomes increasingly clear in the case of posthumous music releases: when the artist is no longer alive to make decisions, questions arise about whose interests are being prioritized. Without the original creator's involvement, decisions about what is released, how it is presented, and for what purpose are often made by others—such as record labels, estates, or collaborators—each guided by their own values and rewards. As Bourdieu (1983) argues, when commercial interests dominate a cultural space, the original intent and symbolic capital of the work can be overshadowed by economic logic. In the context of posthumous releases, this dynamic can lead to the artist's legacy being transformed from something meaningful into a product designed more for consumption than for artistic or cultural value. These tensions highlight the ethical challenges that arise when the boundaries between artistic intent and commercial interests become blurred. This becomes even more complex with the rise of new technologies that challenge widespread ideas of authorship and intent.

The tension between cultural and economic logics that Bourdieu describes becomes even more complicated when AI is involved. As AI tools increasingly allow for the manipulation and creation of music in the likeness of both living and late artists, questions about authorship and intent become even more difficult to answer. The potential use of AI in posthumous releases raises significant ethical concerns around consent, autonomy, and the authenticity of the work. AI systems can develop forms of influence that aren't fully traceable to human input, especially when they involve emergence or independent learning—raising questions about autonomy and agency in the creative process (Dahlstedt, 2021, p. 883-884). AI's growing role in commercial music—where tools are trained on large existing datasets—challenges notions of authenticity and authorship (Patil, 2024). This raises concerns about



ownership, originality, and the potential commodification of musical creativity, showing how AI can deepen the tension between the cultural and economic fields.

### ***2.1.1 Orders of Worth and Justifications***

While Bourdieu describes a tension between the cultural and economic fields, the orders of worth theory, originally developed by Boltanski and Thévenot, offers a more detailed way to understand the different types of logic at play. Instead of just two fields in opposition, it identifies seven distinct ‘orders’ or value systems that people draw on to justify their views or actions (Patriotta et al., 2011). The orders of worth framework suggests that cultural and economic fields are made up of multiple, sometimes compatible and sometimes conflicting, forms of reasoning, offering a more nuanced way to understand how people justify their views beyond a simple cultural-economic divide. Table 1, reproduced from Patriotta et al. (2011, p. 1810), provides an overview of these orders and serves as a reference point throughout this thesis.

**Table 1**

*Overview of the Seven Orders of Worth in the Framework of Boltanski and Thévenot*

<i>‘Common worlds’</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Industrial</i>	<i>Civic</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Inspired</i>	<i>Fame</i>	<i>Green</i>
Mode of evaluation (worth)	Price, cost	Technical efficiency	Collective welfare	Esteem, reputation	Grace, singularity, creativeness	Renown, fame	Environmental friendliness
Test	Market competitiveness	Competence, reliability, planning	Equality and solidarity	Trustworthiness	Passion, enthusiasm	Popularity, audience, recognition	Sustainability, renewability
Form of relevant proof	Monetary	Measurable: criteria, statistics	Formal, official	Oral, exemplary, personally warranted	Emotional involvement and expression	Semiotic	Ecological ecosystem
Qualified objects	Freely circulating market good or service	Infrastructure, project, technical object, method, plan	Rules and regulations, fundamental rights, welfare policies	Patrimony, locale, heritage	Emotionally invested body or item, the sublime	Sign, media	Pristine wilderness, healthy environment, natural habitat

<i>'Common worlds'</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Industrial</i>	<i>Civic</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Inspired</i>	<i>Fame</i>	<i>Green</i>
Qualified human beings	Customer, consumer, merchant, seller	Engineer, professional, expert	Equal citizens, solidarity unions	Authority	Creative beings	Celebrity	Environmentalists, ecologists
Time formation	Short-term, flexibility	Long-term planned future	Perennial	Customary part	Eschatological, revolutionary, visionary moment	Vogue, trend	Future generations
Space formation	Globalization	Cartesian space	Detachment	Local, proximal anchoring	Presence	Communication network	Planet ecosystem

*Note.* From “Maintaining Legitimacy: Controversies, Orders of Worth, and Public Justifications,” by G. Patriotta, J. Gond, and F. Schultz, 2011, *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(8), p. 1810 (<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00990.x>). CC-BY-NC.

People may use artistic or cultural values to justify either their support for or opposition to posthumous music releases. For example, they may question whether a release feels respectful and shows care for the artist’s creative identity and reputation. Some might argue that such projects honour or, conversely, undermine the artist’s legacy, depending on how closely the release aligns with their established style or perceived intentions. Within the orders of worth framework, such arguments can be linked to the *inspired* order, which values creativity, passion, and emotional involvement, and the *fame* order, which emphasises public recognition and renown (Patriotta et al., 2011). These justifications reflect Bourdieu’s (1983) idea that in the cultural field, symbolic capital—such as prestige, recognition, and respect—matters more than financial gain.

At the same time, people may also appeal to economic reasoning when evaluating posthumous releases. Some might view them as a way to maintain the artist’s legacy, support their estate, or generate continued revenue. Others may be more critical, viewing such releases as overly commercial or exploitative. In both cases, economic considerations are central to the justification. Within the orders of worth framework, these types of arguments

reflect the *market* order, which values profit and competition (Patriotta et al., 2011). As Bourdieu (1983) points out, cultural and economic fields are often intertwined, and these justifications show how market values can shape—and sometimes clash with—artistic ones.

Posthumous music releases can be viewed through multiple, sometimes conflicting, lenses that reflect both cultural and economic values. While some justifications appeal to values like creativity, legacy, and respect for the artist's vision, others rely on profit motives and market reasoning. The orders of worth framework adds nuance to Bourdieu's idea of cultural and economic fields by highlighting that people draw on more than just two types of logic when justifying their views. This more nuanced view of cultural and economic logics offers a way to understand the range of justifications people use in terms of both artistic and commercial values.

## **2.2 Authenticity, Commercialisation, and AI in Posthumous Music**

Posthumous music releases often sit at an uncomfortable intersection of art and commercial gain. While they can help keep an artist's memory alive and hold emotional meaning for fans, they may also be influenced by industry interests that don't reflect the artist's original intentions. Research shows that a celebrity's death can significantly boost demand for their work (Brandes et al., 2014; Radford & Bloch, 2012), creating strong incentives for labels and estates to capitalise on that attention. This raises questions about how authentic these releases really are, especially when the artist is no longer around to shape or approve them. New technologies like AI only complicate this further, as they enable music to be produced in an artist's style without their direct involvement.

Authenticity in music often depends on authorship and intent, but with posthumous releases, the artist is no longer able to shape or approve how their music is presented. Critics tend to view posthumous albums more favourably when they align with an artist's earlier work, suggesting that coherence can contribute to perceptions of authenticity (Price, 2020).

The rise of AI-generated music complicates things further. AI art fundamentally differs from human art because it lacks intentionality and consciousness (Tao, 2022), which challenges the authenticity of AI-produced music by removing the creative agency traditionally attributed to the artist. Avdeeff (2019) argues that AI-generated music can provoke a sense of unease in listeners through what she calls the *audio uncanny valley*, where near-human sound production unsettles listeners' expectations about how music is created. This unease reflects concerns about the authenticity of music made without the artist's input. Yet despite these concerns, little research has examined how authenticity is perceived in posthumous music, especially when new technologies like AI are involved.

While concerns about authenticity often focus on artistic intent, posthumous releases may also be driven by commercial motives. Research shows that death-related publicity can boost visibility and sales (Brandes et al., 2014), effectively turning a celebrity's passing into a marketing opportunity. This commercial logic is also reflected in what D'Rozario and Yang (2020, p. 253) describe as the "market for Delebs" (dead celebrities), where deceased public figures are managed as marketable brands. AI technologies can add to the commercialisation of posthumous music by creating new material without the artist, making it easier and cheaper to produce music. Patil (2024) warns that AI-assisted music production risks commodifying musical creativity, replacing human composers with cheaper, automated alternatives. Similarly, Torres et al. (2024) point out that AI's cost-effectiveness often comes at the expense of freelance artists' income and job opportunities. Commercial motives behind posthumous releases keep an artist's work and image profitable long after their death, potentially amplified by AI's role in music production.

The tension between authenticity and commercial motives is a complicated issue in posthumous works, especially as technologies like AI open up new ways of creating and releasing music without the artist's involvement. Whether these works are viewed as genuine

artistic expressions or profit-driven products may depend on how they are presented to audiences. Holographic concerts, for example, allow fans to reconnect with deceased artists (Geden, 2022), but also raise questions about commercial motives, as “Delebs” can still generate profit. Audience reactions are mixed: while some fans find them emotionally moving, others feel a sense of discomfort or unease (Fernandes, 2024), which may reflect uncertainty around authenticity. While this area remains underexplored, this tension shows how posthumous works sit between meaning and money, raising important questions about how such releases are understood and justified today.

### **2.3 Consent and Autonomy in Posthumous Music**

The release of posthumous music prolongs an artist’s presence in the world but raises difficult ethical questions about consent and autonomy. While the dead cannot speak for themselves, they may still retain a form of personhood through their ongoing digital presence (Meese et al., 2015). For example, Mac Miller’s estate manages an Instagram account dedicated to his image and music, promoting posthumous releases and engaging with fans. This enduring presence complicates the assumption that death ends an individual’s influence, especially when music is re-released, remixed, or even newly generated in their name through new technologies like AI. Legal rules surrounding this topic often derive from cultural norms, treating the dead as rights holders who deserve dignity and some measure of posthumous autonomy (Smolensky, 2009). This raises important questions about how consent and autonomy can—or should be—respected in posthumous music releases.

Consent becomes complicated when music is released after an artist’s death, as decisions often depend on interpreting past intentions. Hanson (2023) argues that posthumous wishes matter because they reflect an individual’s agency, and while these wishes aren’t always enforceable, they still carry moral weight. In Mac Miller’s case, he had discussed the release of *Balloonism* with close family and collaborators during his lifetime, which they

later communicated to fans, offering a rare example of implied consent to guide posthumous releases. Estates and next of kin often act as proxies for the deceased, based on their presumed understanding of the person's wishes (Smolensky, 2009). Yet these proxies may misinterpret or override those wishes, based on emotional or personal interests. People should retain some control over their (digital) identity after death (Buitelaar, 2017)—a concern that becomes even more pressing when AI is used to simulate or extend an artist's voice. Determining consent after death is difficult, making it crucial to carefully respect prior wishes.

While autonomy involves an artist's control over their creative work, this control often diminishes after death, as decisions are made by others. Posthumous decisions typically rely on proxies—such as estates or next of kin—who may not fully understand or respect the artist's intentions, even when written instructions exist (Smolensky, 2009). Without the artist there to clarify their wishes or intervene, their autonomy can be compromised by misunderstandings or personal interests. Legal and moral protections for an artist's rights after death are limited and often fail to fully preserve their autonomy (Rösler, 2008; Rub, 2022). These gaps mean that decisions about an artist's work can be influenced by others' interests or interpretations, rather than the artist's original intentions. New technologies like AI further complicate this issue, as they can generate music in an artist's style without their input (Avdeeff, 2019), shifting creative control to developers or producers and further weakening posthumous autonomy.

Whether posthumous releases are ethical depends largely on how well they respect the artist's prior wishes and maintain their creative control. As previously stated, estates and families often act as decision-makers, but they don't always get it right—sometimes misinterpreting or even overriding what the artist would have wanted. Legal protections don't always help, and AI adds another layer of uncertainty by creating music that the artist never approved. In Mac Miller's case, earlier conversations about his ideas for what is now

*Balloonism* gave this posthumous album a clearer sense of consent and creative autonomy. Still, transparency about who's making these choices and how the music is made is key. Ultimately, respecting an artist after their death means doing your best to honour their wishes and legacy.

### **3. Methods**

This section outlines the methodological approach of the study. It describes the research design, participant sampling, data collection procedures, and the strategy for data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

To investigate these complex and personal perspectives, this study adopted a qualitative research design. This approach is well-suited to exploring ethical concerns, as it allows for in-depth engagement with participants' individual experiences, values, and opinions. Rather than looking for general patterns or statistics, the focus here is on understanding the reasoning and emotions behind people's views. Qualitative methods offer the flexibility for participants to share their thoughts in their own words, providing a richer and more nuanced understanding of the topic. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. These interviews followed a set of key themes while leaving space for open discussion, allowing participants to reflect freely and introduce perspectives that might not have been anticipated in advance. This balance between structure and openness ensures consistency across interviews while still giving room for unique and meaningful responses.

As a central case study, this research focuses on the music of the late artist Mac Miller. His work—both released during his life and after his death—serves as a central example throughout the study and as a selection criterion for participants. By focusing on one artist, the

study can explore how ethical perspectives take shape around a concrete example while still allowing room for broader reflections on posthumous music more generally.

### 3.2 Participants

Participants were selected to provide insight from both the industry perspective (artists) and the audience perspective (fans). By comparing the views of these two groups, this study explores how the perspectives of those who create music and those who consume it align or differ regarding posthumous releases. A total of 16 participants were included in the study, consisting of five artists and 11 fans, with ages ranging between 18 and 28 (see Table 2 for gender distribution). A purposeful sampling strategy was used to ensure that participants had relevant knowledge or experience related to the topic (Coyne, 1997).

**Table 2**

*Participant Groups by Gender*

Gender	Artists	Fans
Male	5	5
Female	0	6
Total	5	11

The ‘artists’ group consists of musicians who are active within the hip-hop genre, which aligns with the music style of the late artist Mac Miller. Their insights help to understand how artists think about posthumous releases. While selected based on their work within the hip hop genre, most also considered themselves fans of Mac Miller’s work, allowing them to reflect on his posthumous releases from both a professional and listener perspective. Participants were selected based on genre relevance and recruited through direct



outreach via social media (e.g., Instagram) and personal networks. Artists are included because they may offer firsthand reflections on topics such as creative control and artistic intent related to the production and release of music. They may have different ethical concerns than fans, providing insight into the professional considerations surrounding posthumous work.

The ‘fans’ group consists of music listeners who are familiar with Mac Miller’s music, whether released during his lifetime or after his death. Selection was based on having listened to Mac Miller’s music, ensuring a shared point of reference during interviews—even if not all identified as dedicated fans. Fans were recruited through social media (e.g., Instagram) and personal networks. Their perspectives are valuable for understanding how posthumous releases are received and interpreted by listeners. Fans were chosen as a comparison group because they represent the consumers of posthumous music, and their reception can shape industry practices. Examining how listeners justify or criticize posthumous releases can help highlight the ethical dilemmas at play.

### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

Data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews, which primarily took place in person. Only in three cases, when participants were located too far away for an in-person meeting, interviews were conducted online via video call (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams). Interviews lasted between 24 and 65 minutes ( $M = 36.88$ ,  $SD = 11.03$ ), depending on the depth of responses. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent to ensure that responses were captured accurately, to proceed with transcription and analysis.

A predefined set of questions was used to guide the conversation, but follow-up questions were added during the interviews to explore unexpected but relevant topics. This allowed for consistency across interviews as well as the opportunity to explore relevant topics more in depth. This interview guide (included in Appendix A) was tested beforehand in a pilot

interview to ensure clarity and suitability, and was designed to be suitable for both artists and fans. It is structured around key themes such as experiences with posthumous music, authenticity and artistic intent, ethical considerations, commercialisation, and the impact of emerging technologies like AI. This thematic structure supports a balanced exploration of shared concerns and differing perspectives across both participant groups.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Once transcribed, the interviews were uploaded into ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software used to organise the data and compare responses across participants. The analysis followed an abductive thematic approach, identifying recurring themes across interviews while remaining open to unexpected insights. The analysis focused on moments in the data that stood out or felt unexpected, using these points of surprise to rethink earlier assumptions and explore new directions, which is in line with abductive reasoning (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012).

The abductive process involved three key steps: revisiting, defamiliarisation, and alternative casing (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). First, all transcripts were carefully read and revisited to become familiar with the content and identify surprising responses. This was followed by defamiliarisation, which involved setting aside prior assumptions and examining the data with a fresh perspective, allowing less obvious patterns or unexpected insights to emerge. Lastly, alternative casing was used to consider how the same data might be interpreted differently depending on the theoretical lens applied. Specifically, the analysis drew on Bourdieu's ideas about cultural versus economic logic, as well as Boltanski and Thévenot's orders of worth, focusing particularly on the market, fame, and inspired orders. These frameworks helped make sense of tensions around commercialisation, authenticity, and artistic value in the data.

Themes were developed iteratively by coding the transcripts and comparing responses across interviews. ATLAS.ti facilitated the organisation of themes and supported comparisons between participants, helping to identify where perspectives of fans and artists aligned or diverged. This process allowed for a structured but flexible way of interpreting the data, taking into account both recurring patterns and surprising insights.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

This study follows ethical guidelines to protect participant rights and ensure confidentiality. To ensure that this research project abides by ethical guidelines, it has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences (BMS) at the University of Twente (domain Humanities & Social Sciences). Prior to participation, individuals received a detailed informed consent form (which can be found in Appendix B) explaining: the purpose of the study and how their responses will contribute to the research, their right to withdraw at any point without providing a reason, and how their data will be anonymized and stored securely. To protect participant anonymity, personal identifiers were removed from transcripts and any written analysis. Participants were assigned numbers during transcription, while pseudonyms were used in the written analysis to ensure their responses could not be traced back to them.

## **4. Findings**

This section presents the main themes that emerged from the data. The findings are structured around recurring concerns and interpretations related to posthumous music releases, highlighting both shared views and differences between fans and artists.

## 4.1 Concerns About Artificial Intelligence

All participants expressed scepticism or concern about the use of artificial intelligence in posthumous music releases. The main reasons for this were concerns about exploitation due to a loss of control and a loss of human creativity. These concerns can be understood through the idea of the ‘economic world reversed’, where cultural value is seen in opposition to economic value, meaning cultural goods are considered more valuable when there is a disinterest in profit (Bourdieu, 1983). The *inspired* and *fame* orders of worth both fit within the cultural field, with the inspired order valuing creativity and passion, and the fame order centred on recognition and celebrities (Patriotta et al., 2011). Meanwhile, the *market* order clearly matches the economic field, where commercial success is key (Patriotta et al., 2011). Although the *fame* and *market* orders can often align through the pursuit of recognition and profit, the *inspired* order typically resists this logic, making the use of AI in posthumous releases especially troubling for participants who see it as prioritising profit over authentic artistic expression.

Both fans and artists expressed discomfort with the use of AI in posthumous music because of its potential to be used in exploitative ways. Within the economic field, this concern reflects the *market* order of worth, which values profit and commercial success (Patriotta et al., 2011). Fans worried that it could allow labels to keep releasing music under an artist’s name without their input or consent. Artists similarly warned that AI might be used to polish up rough iPhone demos that were never meant for release, simply to generate more music and thus more profit. This concern was clearly voiced by Ella, a fan critical of how artists are treated after their death:

*“If we have the lyrics and we have the voice, it’s very easy for people to just mix it up and say, okay, we’ll just put it through AI, finish it up and publish it and say it was*

*what they sang. [...] By using the kind of persona of an artist who has passed, it will generate more interest.”*

As Ella points out, “by using the kind of persona of an artist who has passed, it will generate more interest.” This highlights a tension between commercial motivations and respect for the artist’s identity. Her concern reflects both the *market* order of worth, where value is measured in profit, and the *fame* order, where fame and recognition are key (Patriotta et al., 2011). AI, in this context, becomes a tool for continuing to capitalise on an artist’s name, even after death.

A general concern is that the use of AI in posthumous music could strip artists of control over their creative work, including their voices and lyrics. Fans imagined scenarios where AI might make artists say things they never actually said, which they found deeply problematic. They see it as not just misleading, but something that undermines the meaning and emotional value of the work. Ella further explained her view, stressing the importance of artistic intent:

*“I think it’s horrible because [...] you’re using someone’s voice to do something completely different. I think it’s something that should be watched very carefully because it could go wrong really quickly. You are putting people’s words into their mouths, kind of, without them ever saying those things. And, I think if posthumous music was created with AI, then the lyrics cannot really be the lyrics of the artist anymore. And it takes a lot away from the artist. So, the music is not theirs anymore, but also not the voice, not the lyrics. And not the passionate path behind it.”*

As Ella warns, “it could go wrong really quickly. You are putting people’s words into their mouths.” This concern connects to the *inspired* order of worth, where artistic value is about passion and self-expression (Patriotta et al., 2011). The use of AI in this way goes against those ideals. One artist did raise the possibility of giving more control back to musicians through clear agreements made while they are alive, such as wills or contract clauses that specify how AI can or cannot be used after their death. Ultimately, participants expressed discomfort with AI taking away the artist’s control over their voice and creative output. The concern extended beyond misleading representations to a deeper loss of creative agency, where the artist no longer has a say in how their work and voice are used.

There was a shared sense that music made by AI lacks the creativity, emotion, and effort that define human-made art. While AI may be able to mimic structure or style, both fans and artists felt that something essential is missing when the human touch is removed. This reflects the *inspired* order of worth, where artistic value comes from personal expression and emotion (Patriotta et al., 2011). This concern was captured by Daniel, a passionate fan with a strong dislike of AI in music:

*“I am a very big hater of AI-created music because I feel like it’s like this uncanny valley type of thing where you feel like the AI has a good understanding of the structures and how it works in a formulaic way. But the human part of things, it’s just not there. [...] It just feels very sterile. [...] there is no real emotion.”*

As Daniel puts it, “the human part of things, it’s just not there.” For fans, it was exactly this human element that gave music its meaning, and without it, they felt something important was lost. A similar sentiment was found with artists. Max, an independent hip hop artist, explained how AI-songs feel empty when they lack human effort:

*“That’s why some songs are cooler than others, because you know the work that went into them, you know how special they are. And all of that disappears once it’s just a single button. I can definitely appreciate the algorithm, but not the music anymore.”*

As Max’s comment suggests, artists valued the effort and craft behind music, seeing AI as removing the human work and meaning that make songs special. Artists also stated that AI-generated works lack the uniqueness that human-made music has, warning that if it becomes widely accepted in music, it could lower the overall quality of art.

The use of AI in posthumous music makes the existing tension between making money and honouring artistic legacy more explicit. While Bourdieu distinguished between the economic field, focused on market logic, and the cultural field, centred on symbolic logic, this division is not so clear-cut in practice. The orders of worth linked to these fields can align or conflict. The *fame* order, connected to the cultural field, aligns with market logic, where recognition often leads to financial gain, showing these fields are not completely separate. In contrast, the *inspired* order, which values emotional expression and creative passion, resists the market logic. This tension is evident in participants’ concerns that AI-generated music risks turning an artist’s emotional and creative legacy into a commodity, rather than a meaningful tribute.

## **4.2 Exploitation vs. Tribute**

Posthumous music releases highlight how closely cultural and economic interests are intertwined. As Bourdieu (1983) pointed out, the cultural and economic fields are never completely separate—financial considerations often shape which works get released and how they are valued. This overlap was reflected in participants’ views: while some saw

posthumous releases as commercial exploitation, others believed they could be meaningful tributes that honour the artist and provide an emotional connection for fans.

While commercial interests are often seen as clashing with artistic integrity, artists described them as a necessary part of making posthumous releases possible. As Bourdieu (1983) points out, cultural works are never completely free from economic logic. Rather than viewing labels purely as exploitative, they recognised that commercial support can also help keep an artist's legacy alive. This connects to the *market* order of worth, where market dynamics and financial success are central values (Patriotta et al., 2011). While not celebrated, commercial interests were often seen by artists as a trade-off, which could be justified as long as it helped share the artist's work with the world. This was expressed by Max, a hip hop artist who reflected on the role of labels in releasing posthumous music:

*“It’s a shame that labels see the commercial value in that, but it’s also a good thing, because it means it can actually be released to the world. You still see Mac Miller’s album in every record store today, and without the label, that wouldn’t have happened.”*

For Max, the emotional and cultural value of releasing a late artist's work was inseparable from the business structures that made it possible. Jimmy, another hip hop artist, echoed this, saying that while it can be hard to mix the two, “art can’t exist without business”. These views contrasted with the more critical stance taken by fans, who mostly say commercial interests undermine authenticity.

Fans worried that labels exploit an artist's name and reputation to generate profits from posthumous releases. This commercial use of their identity was seen as a way to capitalise on their legacy, often without genuine respect for the artist. These concerns reflect



the *fame* order of worth, in which renown is a key source of value (Patriotta et al., 2011)—one which labels might use for profit after an artist’s death.

A related concern focused on who benefits financially from these releases. Both fans and artists felt uneasy knowing that profits might mainly go to labels or others with commercial interests. These ideas resonate with the *market* order of worth, where value is measured in financial terms (Patriotta et al., 2011). It was suggested that directing a portion of earnings to charity or causes important to the artist could help reduce the purely profit-driven motivations behind posthumous music.

Artists emphasised that posthumous releases should be passion projects, created to honour and celebrate the artist’s legacy with care and respect. Michael, an artist active in the hip hop scene and part of a band, captured this sentiment:

*“But I do think that when the work is handled carefully, and you involve the people who were also involved in the older work, and you involve people who were close to the artist during the time he was alive. It really becomes a passion project to still honour that artist together. [...] I think in an equal way it can become something super beautiful and something very honourable. [...] Balloonerism [...] was obviously finished by other people. There are obviously different ideas in there, but still passion for authenticity and for what the project is.”*

Michael’s words highlight the importance of involving those who knew the artist and had worked with them on previous music when creating a passion project. Artists often pointed to Mac Miller’s *Balloonerism* as a beautiful example of a posthumous release handled with care and genuine respect for the artist. This emphasis on passion and emotional involvement reflects the *inspired* order of worth, where honouring the artist is central

(Patriotta et al., 2011). In this way, passion projects are seen as heartfelt tributes that keep the artist's legacy alive.

Posthumous releases can carry deep emotional meaning for fans. Both fans and artists described them as moments that offer a final moment of connection or closure after an artist's death. This idea was captured by Levi, a hip hop artist and producer, who reflected on the emotional impact of hearing Mac Miller's music after his passing:

*"It always has a certain emotional weight to it, I find. Especially if you knew the artist a bit better, or if you were already a fan while the artist was still alive. With Mac Miller, for example, I found it really strange at first to hear his voice, knowing he was no longer around. So in that sense, it actually adds something to the experience, like you're getting a bit more time with someone who's no longer here. I think that's something very special."*

Levi's description of posthumous music as a way to spend "a bit more time" with an artist speaks to the powerful emotional bond that can exist between artists and their fans. Another artist even compared it to a musical funeral: a final release that allows fans to say goodbye. Fans also spoke about this connection, describing posthumous releases as comforting or even healing. These responses reflect the *inspired* order of worth, where value is found in emotional involvement (Patriotta et al., 2011). In this view, posthumous music is not just a product, but a tribute that helps fans process the loss of their favourite artist and keep their presence alive a little longer.

These findings highlight a complex tension that mirrors Bourdieu's (1983) view of competing economic and cultural fields in cultural production. While artists acknowledged commercial interests as a kind of necessary evil—seeing them as essential in sustaining an

artist's legacy through posthumous releases—fans saw those same interests as intruding on the cultural field. This is especially interesting as one might expect artists to lean more on the *inspired* order of worth, valuing passion and emotion above all (Patriotta et al., 2011). Instead, they balanced these values with market logics, recognising economic structures as necessary support. This dynamic not only illustrates Bourdieu's argument that cultural production is inseparable from economic interests (1983) but also suggests that artists may be more conscious of this interdependence than fans.

### 4.3 Consent

Questions of consent were central to ethical concerns about posthumous music. The idea of releasing unfinished material was viewed as potentially meaningful, but also raised uncertainty about what the artist would have wanted. This concern also points to the tension between different orders of worth, where consent acts as a way to protect the artist's vision (*inspired* order) from market logics.

A common concern was whether an artist would have truly wanted their unreleased music to be shared after their death. These doubts were especially strong when posthumous projects felt rushed, incomplete, or not clearly guided by the artist's intentions. Charlotte, a fan of several artists whose music has been released posthumously, shared how this uncertainty often complicates her listening experience:

*“It's not the same. Mainly also because I know it's [...] not really them that took the action to release it. So, you never know how much they actually wanted that song to be out or that album to be out.”*

Charlotte's reflection points to a deeper concern: without the artist's active involvement, it's hard to know whether a release aligns with their wishes. This was often

contrasted with Mac Miller's *Balloonism*, which felt different because Miller had expressed a desire to release it while alive. This sensitivity to an artist's personal intentions and wishes connects to the *inspired* order of worth, which values an artist's vision and expression (Patriotta et al., 2011). Without clear consent, posthumous music may feel uncomfortable.

A common response to this uncertainty surrounding posthumous releases was the idea that artists should be able to clearly state their wishes before their death. One commonly proposed solution was the idea of a 'musical will'—a document outlining which material may or may not be released. This would allow both fans and industry professionals to know what the artist's intentions were. David, a music enthusiast, described how this could become a standard part of the music industry:

*"That it becomes kind of normal for artists to create some kind of musical will. That seems like a really good idea to me. [...] I think it's smart for artists to protect themselves in that way, but it also seems like a good idea if record labels would offer that as a standard practice. That way, everyone knows what to do if you pass away."*

David's words, 'it's smart for artists to protect themselves in that way,' reflect Bourdieu's idea that the cultural field is never completely separate from the economic field (1983). A musical will serves as a tool to safeguard the artist's creative intentions, ensuring they are respected within the commercial structures that ultimately control the distribution and use of their work after death. In this way, consent becomes a crucial mechanism for balancing the *inspired* order of worth with economic realities.

## 5. Discussion

This study answers the research question by showing that fans and artists justify their support for or opposition to posthumous music releases through a negotiation of cultural and economic values. Both groups recognise the risk of exploitation, especially when commercial interests overshadow respect for artistic intent, with concerns intensified by AI's capacity to strip human creativity and agency. At the same time, artists view commercial involvement as a necessary means of sustaining an artist's legacy—a trade-off that can enable respectful, meaningful tributes when managed carefully. Overall, the justification for supporting posthumous releases depends on whether they are perceived as genuine, respectful tributes that preserve the artist's legacy or as profit-driven products that commodify it.

### 5.1 Interpreting the Findings

The findings help explain how fans and artists navigate the ethical complexity of posthumous music releases by drawing on different orders of worth that reflect a tension between cultural and economic values (Patriotta et al., 2011). Consistent with Bourdieu's (1983) theory of cultural production, participants did not see these fields as fully separable: economic interests were acknowledged as both enabling and threatening to artistic integrity. Notably, artists often justified commercial involvement as a necessary infrastructure that allows a late artist's work to reach audiences, balancing these market realities with a commitment to respecting the artist's legacy. Fans were more sceptical, seeing commercial motives as undermining authenticity and exploiting fame for profit, echoing what D'Rozario and Yang (2020) describe as the “market for Delebs,” where dead celebrities are turned into brands.

An interesting and perhaps unexpected finding is that artists—who might be assumed to place the *inspired* order above all (Patriotta et al., 2011)—often balanced it against market realities more consciously than fans did. This suggests a more thoughtful negotiation between

economic pressures and artistic values by cultural producers. While an alternative explanation might be that artists are simply more financially invested in these structures, the data indicates a genuine concern with legacy and authenticity that challenges this view.

The specific concern about AI adds an important, timely dimension to these debates by making the tension between cultural and economic values even more explicit. Both fans and artists saw AI as risking the reduction of art to a mere commodity by removing the human creativity and control essential to meaningful expression, thus illustrating the conflict between the *market* and *inspired* orders of worth (Patriotta et al., 2011). This finding is significant because it shows how new technologies can intensify cultural-economic tensions in music production, reinforcing arguments in previous research about the commodification of musical creativity (Patil, 2024).

Consent is another important dimension in the findings, resonating with arguments from previous research that the dead deserve some measure of posthumous autonomy (Smolensky, 2009) and that respecting an artist's wishes is important because it reflects their agency (Hanson, 2023). Participants often questioned whether posthumous releases truly aligned with what the artist would have wanted, suggesting that a musical will could offer a concrete way for artists to retain some control over their work after death. Connecting it to Bourdieu's (1983) perspective, it offers a way to limit the economic field's intrusion on the cultural field, helping to preserve an artist's control over their legacy, even after they are gone. Overall, these findings underscore the complex, negotiated nature of cultural production in posthumous music, where support or opposition depends less on rejecting economic value outright than on ensuring it serves, rather than exploits, artistic meaning.

## 5.2 Implications

This research supports Bourdieu's (1983) view that cultural and economic fields are never fully separate, but also shows that economic interests can enable the cultural field—

especially as artists see commercial structures as necessary to share and preserve a late artist's work. This nuance is particularly clear in the context of posthumous music, where legacy depends on market structures. The study also extends the orders of worth framework (Patriotta et al., 2011) by illustrating tensions between *inspired* and *market* orders in posthumous decisions, while challenging the idea of these orders as strictly oppositional. Participants drew on multiple logics at once, strategically combining them—for example, by proposing consent mechanisms like musical wills to balance respect for artistic intent with economic realities.

These findings have several practical implications for those involved in managing posthumous music releases. First, they highlight the importance of transparency and communication with audiences about how decisions surrounding such releases are made and where the profits go, since fans often view economic interests with scepticism. Labels and estates can help build trust by clearly explaining how these releases honour the artist's legacy. Second, the research suggests that mechanisms like musical wills could offer artists a concrete way to ensure their creative intentions are respected after death. Record labels might consider developing clearer standards or templates for such wills to support artists in planning their posthumous wishes.

The growing accessibility of AI in music production adds further practical relevance. Rather than treating AI purely as a commercial tool, the industry should consider developing clear guidelines that safeguard an artist's autonomy and creativity—even exploring ways for artists to specify in advance whether and how their voice or style can be used posthumously, for example, through musical wills. Labels and estates should aim to protect an artist's creative work, rather than reducing it to commercial products. By addressing these concerns, the music industry can balance commercial realities with the duty to honour an artist's legacy, ensuring that posthumous releases are seen as tributes rather than exploitations.

### 5.3 Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers valuable insights into the ethical dilemmas surrounding posthumous music releases, several limitations should be acknowledged. The focus on hip hop was deliberate, as the genre is often linked to posthumous releases, with many artists passing away young and leaving behind unfinished work. However, this genre-specific focus narrows the scope of the findings. Attitudes toward posthumous music may differ considerably across genres; for example, fan responses to unreleased material by a pop artist might vary from reactions to posthumous works by classical composers or electronic producers. These potential genre-based differences were beyond the scope of this research but deserve further attention in future studies. Including participants from other musical genres could help explore how ethical concerns may vary depending on artistic norms, fan cultures, and expectations around legacy.

The focus on hip hop and Mac Miller as a case study likely skewed the sample toward younger audiences. Additionally, the artists included tended to be early in their careers, which may reflect recruitment strategies or network reach rather than the genre itself. This demographic and professional composition meant that perspectives from older listeners, more established artists, and industry professionals such as producers, label executives, or estate managers were missing. These voices could contribute important insights, particularly regarding commercial considerations and behind-the-scenes decision-making. Future research should aim for more varied samples encompassing a wider range of ages, career stages, and professional roles within the music industry, to capture a broader range of views.

In addition to addressing these limitations, this study points to further important directions for future research. As AI increasingly enables the creation of new material in a deceased artist's likeness, urgent questions arise concerning consent, creative control, and authenticity that extend beyond traditional posthumous releases. Future research should



explore how fans and industry professionals perceive and negotiate these challenges. Finally, an important area for future studies is the role of fan communities in mourning, remembering, and actively shaping an artist's legacy through engagement with posthumous releases. Understanding these social and cultural dynamics could deepen insight into the ongoing life of music beyond an artist's death.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

This research aimed to understand how fans and artists justify support for or opposition to posthumous music releases, focusing on the ethical tensions between cultural and economic values. Using hip hop and Mac Miller as a case study, it explored a context where posthumous releases are especially common and often controversial. The findings suggest that fans and artists see these tensions not as simple oppositions but as issues that require negotiation, balancing commercial interests with respect for the artist's wishes and legacy.

Reflecting on this study's approach, it offers a nuanced picture of posthumous music as neither purely exploitative nor purely respectful, but shaped by competing logics that can be balanced through thoughtful planning and transparency. This research suggests that clearer ethical standards—such as musical wills or transparent communication with fans—could help ensure posthumous releases are seen as tributes rather than commodities. The growing role of AI in music production makes these ethical tensions more urgent, as it expands the ways an artist's work might be exploited after death.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Guide**

#### **1. Introduction & Background**

[understand participant's relationship with music & familiarity with posthumous releases – context for their opinions]

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your connection to music?
- How familiar are you with the concept of posthumous music releases?
  - What are your thoughts on it?
- Can you name a posthumous album or song that you have listened to?
  - What was your initial reaction to hearing music released after an artist's passing?

#### **2. Listening Experience**

[explore how participants engage with posthumous music, and whether it differs from how they experience music released during an artist's life]

- Do you experience posthumous music differently from music released while the artist was alive?
- Do you feel any emotional connection to posthumous releases? How does it compare to music released during an artist's lifetime?
- Have you ever felt conflicted or uncomfortable with a posthumous release?

#### **3. Authenticity & Artistic Intent**

[assess participants' perceptions of artistic authenticity in posthumous releases]

- In your view, are posthumous releases usually faithful to the artist's original vision?
- In your opinion, what factors contribute to a posthumous release feeling authentic or inauthentic?
- Do you think it is possible to preserve an artist's original vision when releasing their unfinished work?

#### **4. Ethical Considerations & Control**

[investigate what participants consider to be ethical in posthumous releases, including decision-making authority]

- Do you think artists would generally approve of their work being released posthumously?

- What ethical considerations come into play when deciding whether it is okay to release an artist's music after their death?
  - In your opinion, what factors determine if a posthumous release is handled respectfully?
- Are there specific posthumous releases you think were handled well or poorly? What made them stand out?
  - Have you ever chosen not to listen to a posthumous release because you disagreed with how it was handled?
- Who do you think should have control over an artist's music after they pass away?
  - Who should get to decide whether an artist's unreleased music gets released?
- How would you feel if an artist's family or label released unfinished music without their explicit approval?
- Do you think artists should leave clear instructions about what to do with their unreleased material?
  - If an artist leaves behind unfinished material but no clear instructions, do you think it should be released?

## 5. Commercialization

[understand how participants perceive the influence of commercial interests on posthumous releases]

- Do you think record labels and families have the artist's best interests in mind, or are posthumous releases often more about profit?
- What role do you think record labels, families, or managers play in shaping these releases?
- Do you think fans play a role in shaping how posthumous music is handled?
- How do you see the balance between commercial interests and artistic integrity in this context?

## 6. AI

[explore attitudes toward the use of AI in recreating or extending an artist's work after death]

- What are your thoughts on AI-generated music that replicates an artist's voice or style?

- Would you consider AI-generated songs in an artist's style to be a valid continuation of their work?
- Do you think AI should be used to finish an artist's unfinished work after their death?
- What do you think about using AI to create new songs in a deceased artist's voice?
- Would you personally listen to a song or album created using AI-generated vocals of a deceased artist?
- Would you feel differently about listening to AI-generated music versus an unreleased song recorded by the artist before their death?
- How do you think the increasing use of AI might impact the future of posthumous music or the music industry in general?

## 7. Closing Questions

[reflect on handling of posthumous releases and gather suggestions/critiques]

- What kind of information do you think is important for the public or fans to have when a posthumous release comes out?
- What do you think would be the best way to handle posthumous music releases in the future?
  - Should there be industry-wide guidelines for handling posthumous music?
- Is there anything else you'd like to add or any personal thoughts on this topic that we haven't covered?



## **Appendix B**

### **Informed Consent Form**

#### **Information Sheet**

### **Posthumous Music Between Meaning and Money: Ethical Dilemmas in a Changing Technological Landscape**

Researcher: Janneke Waenink, Bachelor Student, University of Twente  
[Last Edited: 18/04/2025]

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Please read the following information carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. You may take your time to decide and ask questions if anything is unclear.

The purpose of this study is to explore how both music fans and artists view the ethics of posthumous music releases—that is, music that is released after an artist has passed away. Through interviews, the study aims to understand what concerns, values, and justifications are involved in how these releases are received and evaluated.

There are no direct personal benefits or known significant risks involved in participating in this study. However, your participation will help contribute to a better understanding of how ethical issues are viewed in the context of posthumous music, which may be relevant for academic, industry, and public discussions. To ensure that this research project abides by ethical guidelines, it has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences (BMS) at the University of Twente (domain Humanities & Social Sciences).

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time, without needing to give a reason and without any consequences. If you decide to withdraw, any data you have provided will be deleted upon request. If you participate, certain personal data (such as your role as either a fan or artist) may be collected to contextualize your responses. No identifying personal data (such as your name or contact details) will be used in the final report.

All interviews will be audio recorded to ensure an accurate representation of the data. All interview recordings will be transcribed and anonymized. Transcripts will remove all names or other identifiable information. You have the right to access your data, request corrections, and request deletion of your personal data at any point before anonymization. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. The audio recordings and transcripts will be securely stored on the researcher's password-protected device and are only accessible to the researcher. After transcribing, audio recordings will be deleted, and only anonymized transcripts will be used for analysis.

Data will be used exclusively for the purposes of this bachelor's thesis project and may be included in the final thesis report and presentation. Anonymized data may be archived for academic transparency or future research, in the database of the University of Twente under controlled access, but your identity will never be linked to the data.

# Consent Form for Posthumous Music Between Meaning and Money: Ethical Dilemmas in a Changing Technological Landscape

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMED CONSENT FORM

*Please tick the appropriate boxes*

**Yes**   **No**

## **Taking part in the study**

I have read and understood the study information dated [18/04/2025], or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

☐   ☐

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.

☐   ☐

I understand that taking part in the study involves participating in an audio-recorded interview, in which I will be asked questions about my views on posthumous music releases. I understand that the recording will be transcribed into text for analysis, and the original audio file will be permanently deleted after the transcription has been completed.

☐   ☐

## **Use of the information in the study**

I understand that information I provide will be used solely for the purpose of the researcher's final bachelor's thesis report and presentation.

☐   ☐

I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name, will not be shared beyond the study team.

☐   ☐

I agree to be audio recorded.

☐   ☐

I agree that my information can be quoted (anonymously) in research outputs.

☐   ☐

## **Future use and reuse of the information by others**

I give permission for the anonymized transcript that I provide to be archived in the data repository of the University of Twente so it can be used for future research and learning.

☐   ☐

## **Signatures**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what they are freely consenting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Study contact details for further information:**

Janneke Waenink

Email: [j.waenink@student.utwente.nl](mailto:j.waenink@student.utwente.nl)

**Contact Information for Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant**

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Secretary of the Ethics Committee/domain Humanities & Social Sciences of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences at the University of Twente by [ethicscommittee-hss@utwente.nl](mailto:ethicscommittee-hss@utwente.nl)

## **Appendix C**

### **AI Statement**

I have used the Scribbr Citation Generator to format the reference list in this document. In-text referencing was done manually. Additionally, I used Grammarly throughout the writing process to check for spelling and grammar errors and ensure clarity in language.